

C2ing the C2: Improving the Staff of the Corps Support Signal Battalion

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C2ing the C2:
Improving the Staff of the Corps Support Signal Battalion
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Introduction

A junior Army captain with 4 years of service earns over \$70,000 a year.¹ (In a hostile deployed environment, this figure jumps to nearly \$90,000.) Consequently, where captains are not being effectively engaged significant money is wasted, especially given manpower shortages. However, such is the case with the Corps Support Signal Battalion (CSSB). By restructuring the existing CSSB staff, the Army will save money and increase staff efficiency.

Corps Signal Support Organization

In the United States Army, the smallest formation capable of long term, self-sustained operations is the corps. Consisting of two to five maneuver divisions, the corps brings all the logistics support and specialty units necessary to complete the most complex missions. To coordinate this vast enterprise, the design incorporates a corps signal brigade, consisting of three signal battalions in peacetime (expanding to a maximum ten during deployment, when the corps assumes joint task force headquarters

¹ Military Pay Chart 2005, combined with Average CONUS housing allowance for a CPT with 4 years service and 1 dependent.

responsibilities, as V Corps did in Operation Iraqi Freedom I.)²

However, as one of the corps' separate brigades, the signal brigade does not report to a division. Instead, the corps signal brigade commander reports directly to the corps commander, though often the deputy commander is informally designated as the "commander of the separate brigades". This brings unique challenges to the staffs within the signal brigade organization, since the brigade and battalion staffs lack many specialized functions (that normally are handled at the division level, which is missing for these organizations.)

The signal brigade and in turn the signal battalions have some augmentation on their staffs to handle this shortfall, but not much. In fact, the corps support signal battalion's staff Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) does not match its need during deployment and combat. Consequently, making wise use of the allocated personnel as reflected in the MTOE is necessary to make the corps support signal battalions successful.

The Battalion Staff

² FM 11-41, Signal Support: Echelons Corps and Below, pp. 2-1 – 2-10

The battalion staff has five primary staff officers 'on paper' (on the MTOE) but functions currently with four of the five having actual primary status. The S1 (captain, personnel), the S2 (captain, intelligence), the S3 (major, operations), and the S4 (captain, logistics) are the true primaries. The battalion is allotted an S6 (captain, communications), but in reality this officer becomes part of the S3 shop.³ These officers, as well as some special staff, are overseen by two officers. The executive officer oversees administrative and logistics, to include the S1 and S4, along with the chaplain, battalion maintenance officer, electronic maintenance officer, and property book officer. The S3 oversees operations, to include the S2, the S6 (who functions as the assistant S3), and several other staff officers.

Operations

S2 Shop

The S2 handles intelligence functions for the command. The S2's staff by MTOE consists of:

³ MTOE Corps Support Signal Battalion dated July 26,2001

S2 (1LT-CPT, military intelligence officer)⁴

Due to shortages in key military intelligence military occupational specialties (MOSs), the signal battalion typically lacks enlisted military intelligence personnel. Therefore, the military intelligence officer spends most of his time updating security clearance rosters, handling force protection issues (a spillover task from the S3 shop), and picking up 'blotter' reports from the Military Police. Even during deployment and combat, the signal battalion S2 often spends all day reading higher headquarters' intelligence reports, and then summarizing them for the staff nightly.) The officer is effectively doing the job of a good junior non-commissioned officer - not a military intelligence captain and wasting specialized training and language skills that are best spent doing detailed intelligence gathering and analysis for combat.⁵

Moreover, the Corps Support Signal Battalion engages in nothing more dangerous or extensive than convoying, and the S2 can provide no actionable intelligence to help that effort. Even if the S2 could identify solid priority information requirements that could drive decisions on

⁴ MTOE Corps Support Signal Battalion dated July 26,2001

⁵ FM 34-80, Brigade and Battalion Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations, p. 5-0

convoy routes, the battalion completely lacks any assets to collect on them. Hence, either way, a captain is wasted in this billet. A school-trained⁶ non-commissioned officer (either a military intelligence NCO or a cross-trained signal corps NCO) could oversee the same functions without taking a precious military intelligence officer from the intelligence fight.

S3 Shop

By MTOE, the S3 shop consists of the following:

S3 (MAJ, Signal Corps)
Chief Signal NCO (SGM, Signal Corps)
S6 (CPT, Signal Corps)
System Integration Officer (1LT, Signal Corps)
Radio Officer (1LT, Signal Corps)
Wire Officer (1LT, Signal Corps)
Network Management Tech (CW3, Signal Corps)
Network Control Chief (SFC, Signal Corps)
NBC Staff NCO (SSG, Chemical Corps)
Analysis Team Chief (SSG, Automations)
Sr. Software Analyst (SGT, Automations)
Multimedia Illustrator (SPC, Signal Corps)
Administrative Specialist (SPC, Adjutant General Corps)
Software Analyst (SPC, Automations)
Software Analyst (PFC, Automations)⁷

The S6, by MTOE and military tradition, should be handling the internal communications issues of the signal battalion, as well as linking it to other units. In reality, due to the limited movements of the corps support

⁶ By 'school-trained', I mean one-to-two weeks of intense classroom instruction immediately before assuming duty. The position could be branch immaterial, most likely an extra signal non-commissioned officer. We do not need a military intelligence non-commissioned officer for this duty.

⁷ MTOE Corps Support Signal Battalion dated July 26,2001

signal battalion, and plethora of communications channels, this function handles itself (with a little help from the automations section.)

However, what is lacking from the MTOE is an Assistant S3, to oversee operations and manage the multitude of tasks and orders and to backfill the S3, especially on shift work. Converting the S6 slot (CPT position) to be the Assistant S3 would solve the problem.

Moreover, the three lieutenants in the operations shop (radio, wire, and automations officers) have long since stopped working in these specialized areas. The sheer complexity and integration of modern communications equipment requires collaboration, instead of the stove-piped planning reflected by the MTOE. The modern Operations Shop plans together, and these officers, while given formal separate duties, must integrate plans (and perform battle handoffs while working shifts in deployment.) Based on need these billets should be replaced by the following:

Operations Officer (1LT, Signal Corps)
Training Officer (1LT, Signal Corps)
*Unit Movement/Unit Status Report Officer (1LT, Signal Corps)
**billet to be moved to S4 Shop*

The unit movement function, currently performed by the operations shop, is an administrative function better suited for S4 supervision.⁸ Therefore, this slot should be moved to the S4 shop, and possibly be reduced in rank requirement (in fact, the FM states the need for a SSG at the battalion level).⁹ The automations sections duties this person would have performed are easily taken over by the Automations Section NCOIC who point of fact actually performs these duties now.

Administrative/Logistics

S1 Shop

By MTOE, the S1 Shop includes the following:

S1 (CPT, Signal Corps)
S1 NCOIC (SFC, Adjutant General)
Personnel Service Sergeant (SGT, Adjutant General)
Paralegal Specialist (SPC, Judge Advocate General Corps)
Personnel Admin Specialist (SPC, Adjutant General)
Mail Delivery Clerk (PFC, Adjutant General)¹⁰

Although a specialized adjutant general officer would be a 'nice-to-have' if available, a signal corps officer can perform well in this billet. (A lot of the S1 OIC work is common to officers of all fields, including Officer Evaluation Reports, congressional inquiries, etc. Few of

⁸ FM 4-01.011, Unit Movement Operations, p.1-5

⁹ FM 4-01.011, Unit Movement Operations p.1-4

¹⁰ MTOE Corps Support Signal Battalion dated July 26,2001

the S1 OIC functions are very adjutant general specific.)

The most vital billet is the S1 NCOIC. Without support from higher staffs, a strong S1 NCOIC in this position will make a large impact on how well Soldiers' administrative actions are handled. For instance, if a Soldier needs to go on emergency leave, a knowledgeable S1 NCOIC can correctly and quickly generate all the paperwork, and the Soldier will get to fly home - quickly. If we lacked that experience, it may take hours or even days to get all the paperwork straight and the Soldier home in this emergency situation. Consequently, a concerted effort must be made to maintain this billet and those working for the NCOIC. No changes therefore are recommended to the S1 shop.

S4 Shop

The S4 Shop MTOE includes the following:

S4 (CPT, Signal Corps)
S4 NCOIC (SFC, Quartermaster)
2x S4 Clerk (SPC & PFC, Quartermaster)
Property Book Officer (CW2, Quartermaster)
Property Book NCO (SGT, Quartermaster)
Fuel Section NCOIC (CPL, Quartermaster)
2x Fuel Handler (PFC, Quartermaster)¹¹
(Note: Cooks omitted as they are almost always an HHC Commander responsibility)

¹¹ MTOE Corps Support Signal Battalion dated July 26,2001

As previously recommended, this section should be augmented with a 1LT, signal corps to perform unit movement/ unit status report officer duties. This 1LT would come out of the current MTOE for the S3 shop, thus costing the Army no additional personnel.

Also, the Property Book Officer (PBO), although belonging to the S4 on paper, often reports directly to the battalion executive officer. This arrangement can be difficult, as the S4's success often depends on coordination with the Property Book Officer. Consequently, the Property Book Officer's special staff status should be eliminated, and the PBO shop should be returned to the S4's cognizance.

Maintenance

The battalion's maintenance effort is divided into two shops, due to the large amount of signal equipment. There is a motor maintenance shop, and an electronics maintenance shop (which is the size of a full platoon). The MTOE for the officers and NCOs of Maintenance is as follows:

Maintenance Officer (CPT, Signal Corps)
Motor Maintenance Tech (CW2, Ordnance)
Motor Sergeant (MSG, Ordnance)
Electronic Maintenance Tech (CW2, Ordnance)
Electronic Maintenance NCOIC (SFC, Ordnance)

There are an excess number of key personnel in this area for the signal battalion. The battalion maintenance officer (BMO) directly oversees only the motor maintenance side of the house, with the electronic maintenance reporting directly to the battalion executive officer. In reality, the CPT ends up being the 'utility infielder' of the battalion staff, assigned to projects that the more engaged primary staff officers manage to get delegated. For example, the BMO may be in charge of establishing a field recreation center, or writing public affairs articles - items easily covered by personnel like the command group drivers. This position should be eliminated altogether, freeing up a CPT to do more professional tasks in the signal corps, which is already short captains. The Motor Maintenance Tech is quite capable of running the motor program and reporting directly to the battalion executive officer.

Conclusion

By making these simple changes to the signal battalion's staff, the Army can eliminate two captain positions without a significant loss in staff capabilities.

Moreover, a good deal of money can be saved and well-trained personnel employed where they are more needed in the proposed restructuring.

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Military Pay Chart 2005, online at <http://www.dfas.mil>.

MTOE Corps Support Signal Battalion dated July 26, 2001.